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MISGUIDED U.S. FOOD POLICY TOWARD NORTH KOREA

BY

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Misguided U.S. Food Policy Toward North Korea

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ABSTRACT

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In 1995, the United Nations' World Food Program published an urgent plea for nations to donate food and medicines to relieve a complex food emergency in the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea). Several nations, including China, immediately donated food and other supplies to feed starving Koreans. The United States, apparently caught unaware, paused for many months to consider the political and security ramifications of donating significant food, medicines, and funds to the effort. Given previous U.S. policy, the history and nature of the Korean people, and long-term U.S. national security interests, this initial pause was an error. The U.S. should have quickly sent a large, unrestricted donation of food and other needed supplies to ensure that hundreds of thousands of Koreans did not starve to death. The basis for this assertion is that East Asian experts then agreed that Korea would soon reunify. If unified, the Korean people would likely judge harshly this U.S. reluctance. Because the U.S. acted politically rather than humanely, it stands to share with the DPRK blame for needless starvation of thousands of Koreans.

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PREFACE

Before analyzing the U.S. Government's initial food aid policy toward the government of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea), it must be emphasized that the author is not an expert on North Korea, the Republic of Korea (South Korea), U.S. foreign relations, or international politics. The views expressed are the author's alone and in many cases differ with materials published by East Asian experts. The author's views are premised not only upon doing what appears to be "right" from a macro-perspective, but also offering food for thought about what best serves U.S. interests in the long run. The author fully appreciates that what is "right" is often elusive and is dependent upon information not always available to the public. Agreeing on what best supports U.S. interests in the long term, particularly on the Korean peninsula, is the art of international politics.

This analysis is not an attempt to solve the various challenges facing the Koreas or their allies, or to characterize the myriad economic effects of the North Korean food crisis. This debate focuses solely on the U.S. initial food aid policy toward North Korea, and attempts to substantiate that the U.S. reluctance to offer immediate, unrestricted aid was not in its long-term national interests.

The author thanks the many experts who took time to discuss candidly with him their various perspectives on the challenges associated with East Asia and Korea in general, and with U.S. food policy in specific. Some of these experts asked to remain anonymous for a variety of reasons, but their expertise was informative and their time much appreciated. Special thanks is offered to Nicholas Eberstadt (American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research), Andrew Natsios (U.S. Institute for Peace, & former Director, U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance during the Bush Administration, and former Vice President, World Vision), Senior Colonel Zhang Jianguo (Military Attaché, Embassy of the Peoples Republic of China), and Colonel Larry Wortzel (Project Advisor & Director, Strategic Studies Institute). Their patient and enlightening discussions with this amateur analyst proved invaluable.

MISGUIDED U.S. FOOD POLICY TOWARD NORTH KOREA

I. INTRODUCTION

"Security aside, operations to alleviate widespread suffering also reflect the instincts of the American people to provide humanitarian assistance to those in need wherever they are."
U.S. Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region, 1998

In August 1995, the United Nations' World Food Program (WFP) began urging nations to provide emergency food and medical aid to avert widespread famine following a plea for assistance from the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea). North Korea already faced serious food shortages when the crisis was further spurred by torrential flooding over agricultural areas, threatening as many as five million Koreans with severe malnutrition or starvation. The complex emergency also posed the predictable risk of widespread epidemic and internal displacement of Koreans.¹

Several nations immediately sent large amounts of food aid, including the Peoples Republic of China (China) and Japan, which each provided more than 500,000 metric tons (MT).² The U.S., ordinarily a generous leader in food donations, was caught off guard by the North Korean and U.N. pleas for assistance and, rather than donate substantial relief immediately, paused to consider whether and how to give aid.³ Policy makers were fearful that much, if not all, of the aid would be channeled to

the North Korean Army or ruling party elite. The U.S. considered the political and security ramifications of giving aid to North Korea, sought means to verify the extent of the tragedy, and explored the best means for monitoring to ensure that aid actually reached those in need. The U.S. first pledged paltry aid (50,000 MT) in February 1996⁴, several months after news of the famine broke into the headlines. In early 1997, the U.S. pledged another 50,000 MT of aid directed to children under age six, as well as minor financial support for U.N. efforts.⁵

This paper analyzes the pause in providing substantial U.S. food aid to North Korea, and posits that the U.S. erred by not immediately sending substantial and relatively unrestricted assistance. A long-term analysis of the challenges facing the Koreas demonstrates that the decision (or lack of decision) not to send immediate aid violated U.S. food aid policy⁶, weakened U.S. humanitarian legitimacy, and undermined long-range U.S. security interests in East Asia. The U.S. failed for the wrong reasons to do immediately the right thing, and in the process lowered U.S. standing in the eyes of ordinary Koreans, while simultaneously raising the status of China.

II. ANALYTICAL PREMISE

KOREAN REUNIFICATION

The logic for the preceding analysis of U.S. interests is premised upon a near-unanimous belief in 1995-96 among international experts that North and South Korea would soon reunify.⁷ These debates outlined various scripts for Korea's reunification. Many feared a catastrophic implosion of the DPRK economy requiring desperate South Korean and international actions to maintain order in a costly, unpredictable manner. The combative tensions along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) raised the specter of forcible reunification should North Korea invade the South, or vice versa. Some suspected that the DPRK's economic crisis could result in the violent overthrow of Kim Jong-il regime by the North Korean Army. Many hoped for a gradual warming of the North-South relations resulting in a "soft landing" for a failing DPRK government.⁸

One need not pore over the details of these predictions nor become expert in Korean politics or economics to glean their essential aspects. While scholars, policy makers, and social scientists disagreed about the process that would reshape Korea, they agreed that unification was inevitable and relatively close at hand. The U.S. should have organized and executed its food

policy toward North Korea with the understanding that, before too long, Korea would reunify.

Because the DPRK regime remains in power four years later, many experts have qualified their earlier assessments,⁹ but the issue remains in focus. Given U.S. regional interests¹⁰ and that U.S. policy makers believed that Korean unification was imminent, the U.S. erred in not providing immediate, sizable relief. Assessment of the ramifications of any U.S. policy involving North or South Korea (or a unified Korea), however, first requires consideration of Korean history and culture.

III. KOREA IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

A. UNIQUE KOREAN PERSPECTIVE -A "SHRIMP AMONG WHALES"

The Korean peninsula is now among the most complicated and dangerous regions in the world, the "storm over East Asia."¹¹ The capital cities (and majority of populations) of both governments lie less than 50 miles from the DMZ, the "temporary" border between the two Koreas spread generally along the 38th Parallel. More than two million soldiers (40,000 of which are U.S.) face one another along this admittedly artificial demarcation. Both North and South Korean regimes consistently claim legitimate authority to govern the entire peninsula, and each is committed to reunifying the nation under its own,

strikingly different terms. With the disintegration of the former Soviet Union and the warming of China-U.S. and China-South Korea relations, North Korea has lost the umbrella of its traditional guardian states. South Korea, meanwhile, benefits from its political and economic "miracle."¹²

Before discussing these current *differences*, however, it is essential to understand the enduring *similarities* between the North and South Korean people. While the length of this paper does not permit an in-depth discussion of 50 centuries of Korean experience, a summary of Korea's evolution and a review of generally agreed characteristics of Korean culture will suffice to frame the debate. In the 5,000-year history of its people, Korea has been shaped by five principle influences:

- Preserving its indigenous identity;
- Incorporating Chinese culture;
- Enduring Japanese domination during the past century;
- Assimilating Western economic and cultural inroads; and
- Struggling with a divided peninsula.¹³

Koreans proudly recognize that they are a unique and homogeneous culture, a nation with a long history of a single language and indigenous traditions. It is the only country with a continuous history as a single nation for more than 13 centuries that has never fought wars of conquest or expansion.¹⁴

Throughout its history, Korea's biggest challenge has been that it is geographically positioned between three great Asian powers (China, Japan, and Russia), an unfortunate circumstance that has left Korea susceptible to invasion, occupation, and colonization. For centuries, Chinese, Mongols, Manchus, Japanese, and other warlike peoples have preyed upon Korea, the peninsula often hosting a number of invaders simultaneously. Since the 16th Century, Japan and China have traded turns pushing one another off of the peninsula, and early in this century, Russia and Japan fought over its control.¹⁵

In the last century, neighboring great powers have recognized that the peninsula is of vital importance to their national security and thus each has sought to dominate it. Since the mid-19th Century, China, Japan, and Russia have fought wars with one another on, or through, the Korean peninsula. Japan sees the peninsula as a dagger pointed at its heart, while China and Russia view it as an invasion bridge to the Asian mainland. Thus, Korea has been fairly characterized as "a shrimp among whales."¹⁶ Understandably, this gives Koreans a sense of national victimization and a tendency toward xenophobia.¹⁷

B. UNIQUE KOREAN IDENTITY - SOCIETY OF RELATIONSHIPS

The origins of Korean peoples appeared more than 5,000 years, ago, but as a *nation*, Korea's history dates from about the 7th Century when one of three Korean kingdoms, the Silla, conquered the other two with Chinese help. A united Korea emerged, and a special relationship with China endured for more than a thousand years. For a millenium, Korea was in essence the "little brother" of China, with China serving as scholar and protector and Korea paying due tribute to the Emperor.¹⁸ This special relationship has shaped many aspects of Korean culture.

Three royal dynasties ruled Korea through the 19th century. The Silla dynasty ended in 936, replaced by the Koryo, which then gave way to the Choson in 1392. Predictably, given the special relationship with China, Buddhism flourished in the Silla and Koryo dynasties, and Confucianism became the state philosophy of the Choson dynasty.¹⁹ Many of the impacts of a Confucian-oriented society remain today, and this is critical in understanding the nature of Koreans.

In Korea, people generally view themselves as part of a national whole that includes all of society and the world around it. Society is hierarchically arranged, related in a family pattern with ordained responsibilities for everyone. The most important relationship is the family, particularly the

relationship with parents. Order, consensus, and harmony are judged superior values, not competition or adversarial endeavors. Modesty, form, and restraint govern daily relations. Government posts are held in high esteem, while traditionally business and industry positions are not. Government officials are expected to serve with benevolence and wisdom based upon these superior values derived from a study of the Chinese classics. Rulers retain authority to govern so long as they govern within the spirit of these virtues, or so long as they govern "correctly."²⁰

This Confucian ethic melds the individual into a collective family, whose collective goals and interests become those of the individual. Family responsibility takes precedence over all others, including perceived duties to the state or ruler. Interpersonal relationships and responsibilities within non-family groups (e.g., teacher to student, worker to employer) are also important, as are loyalties among association members. A hierarchical pattern of responsibilities and expectations forms relationships in which people are superior or inferior in relation to one another, but rarely equal as in Western philosophy.²¹

Relationships, therefore, form more of the basis for Korean personal and government interactions than the rules of domestic law or international relations.²² Thus, the U.S. must frame and

implement policies toward North and South Korea with a view toward forming a strong relationship with the nations and their peoples, rather than proceed primarily on any Western notion of norms, laws, and rules.

C. UNIQUE KOREAN CULTURE - STRONG NATIONALISM

Given the domination of great powers for so many centuries, how to deal with foreigners has always been a delicate issue for Koreans. In times of crisis, becoming a tributary state and receiving foreign assistance often represented the only source of required resources, or of financial, military, or political support. The danger has always been the associated costs hidden within the agenda of the greater powers, or how to get them to leave after they had helped.²³

While Korea has adopted much of its culture from its more powerful neighbors, Koreans take great pride in having avoided complete absorption into another culture. As a relatively small country dominated by China for more than a thousand years, it imported its religion, philosophy, vocabulary, art, and architecture from its larger neighbor. Yet, Koreans retained a unique language, developed their own writing characters, and maintained Korean royal authority over Korean realms.²⁴

Similarly, Koreans steadfastly survived Japanese attempts to

dilute their culture during the harsh period of colonization in the first half of this century, when Japanese occupiers required Korea to change its official language to Japanese, and forced Koreans to use new Japanese names.²⁵

Maintaining this distinct Korean identity has often required direct government action. In its early history, Korean rulers accomplished this through policies that rigidly controlled or prohibited foreign contact (as North Korea does). Regulations derived from the Confucian system governed house size, building colors, clothing styles, and personal identification cards reinforcing the sense of Korean nationalism. This resulted in appreciation of extremely centralized government and reinforcement that anything of importance concerning Koreans occurred in Seoul.²⁶

In this struggle for nationalism, history has taught Koreans that strong, autocratic rulers have stood up best against foreign intervention, while factionalism among Korean landowners and local leaders has often led to unpleasant foreign intervention. The Koryo dynasty ended as a result of local aristocracies and Buddhist monasteries dividing power with the state; the Choson dynasty crumbled due in part to factional differences which led to Japanese colonization.²⁷

Even during the Cold War, both North and South Korea struggled to maintain their Korean identity through strong

centralized control. In the North, Kim Il-sung placed a Korean twist on Stalinist communism by adopting a philosophy known as *juch'e*, or self-reliance. The gist of the philosophy is that North Korea should always adapt to its circumstances to provide for itself and not be forced to yield to unpleasant foreign policies. This enabled North Korea to maintain independence and a unique Korean identity, while straddling effectively the fence between the Soviet Union and China when relations between them cooled.²⁸

In South Korea, U.S. leaders were consistently frustrated with Korean politics as the national government wielded strong centralized control in contrast to typical Western democracies. Syngman Rhee, the South's first president, twice forced constitutional amendments to permit his reelection, and then resorted to coercion to remain in power. In May 1961, Major General Park Chung-Hee led a coup when military leaders perceived that the parliamentary government was ruling "incorrectly." The South Korean people, while not enthusiastic, were somewhat relieved that the military had stepped in to restore order. Under U.S. pressure to relinquish military control of the central government, General Park resigned his military position and was elected as President beginning in January 1964.²⁹ Civilian regimes continued to exercise strong, centralized control over Korean policies, and

the military enjoyed significant influence over many of them.³⁰ South Korean leaders elected even with less than a majority of the popular vote consistently wielded unabashed authority. This is because within the Korean culture, once elected, the people respected a strong government mandate.³¹

IV. MODERN CIRCUMSTANCES - KOREA IN TRANSITION

A. CURRENT STAGE

Today, the Korean peninsula is the last bastion of the Cold War and perhaps the world's most complicated security circumstance. Two million soldiers have faced one another along the DMZ for 45 years. The potential for conflict has remained consistently high, and recent economic difficulties facing North Korea have cast an uncertain shadow over the peninsula in transition. On the one hand, many Americans perceive that the U.S. spends too much national treasure protecting South Korea, but in reality, given U.S. interests in Asia and the conflicting interests of other great powers, stability on the Korean peninsula remains a vital U.S. interest. On the other hand, many Koreans logically blame the U.S. for their recent suffering, national division, and related security challenges.

B. U.S. IGNORANCE INCREASES SUFFERING

"When you are ignorant of the enemy but know yourself,
your chances of winning or losing are equal."

Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*³²

In the first half of this century, Koreans have suffered greatly because of U.S. ignorance about Korean history and modern circumstances. President Theodore Roosevelt mediated the Portsmouth Treaty ending the 1904-5 Russo-Japanese War, and Japan formally annexed Korea in 1910. U.S. acquiescence lent an aura of legitimacy to the dismemberment of Korea.³³ From 1910 until 1945, Koreans suffered under extremely harsh Japanese domination.

As the Japanese Empire crumbled in August 1945, the U.S. focused primarily on the rehabilitation of Europe and Japan, and was slow to consider the fate of post-war Korea. Despite Department of State calls for U.S. occupation of the entire Korean peninsula and parts of Manchuria, the U.S. military struggled to occupy even a portion of the peninsula.³⁴ In the end, U.S. and Soviet leaders agreed to divide the Korean peninsula into north and south occupation zones to process surrendering Japanese forces. More by accident than purpose, these zones roughly represented the relative boundaries of internal left and right wing Korean factions.³⁵ The zones also generally divided the nation between the resource-rich, industrial North and the agrarian South, thus leaving neither

region capable of meeting the immediate needs of its population.³⁶

The U.S. and Soviet Union had also agreed to remove their forces from the peninsula within three years. Soviet forces departed their zone in 1948, but left behind the Stalinist regime of Kim Il-sung, a popular military hero known for resisting Japanese occupation as a guerilla within Manchuria and Korea during the World War. Despite pleas from South Korean leaders to remain to deter the North's aggression, U.S. forces departed Korea in 1949, leaving the fledgling regime of Syngman Rhee, who had gained popularity organizing Korean political resistance to Japanese occupation while exiled in China.³⁷

As though encouraging the North Koreans, on 12 January 1950, U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson made his famous "perimeter speech" outlining the U.S. defensive perimeter to thwart the spread of Communism in Asia. Made in concert with U.S. military leaders, the perimeter excluded Korea and Formosa (Taiwan).³⁸ These circumstances enticed Kim Il-sung to seek and obtain Soviet and Chinese assent to invade South Korea in June 1950.³⁹ Following three years of devastating conflict, the great powers, U.S. and China, again determined Korea's fate by dividing the peninsula along the 38th Parallel to end the fighting. The conflict left Korea ravaged by war and, for the first time in

many centuries, formally divided the Korean nation so proud of its unique heritage.

C. EARLY DPRK SUCCESS

During the first twenty years of separation, industrial North Korea predictably outpaced agrarian South Korea in expanding its economy.⁴⁰ Further, North Korea enjoyed some international political success as a leader within the non-aligned nations during the Cold War.⁴¹ In achieving this success, North Korea benefited from its Cold War ties with the Soviet Union and China. As China's relations with the West thawed in the early 1970's and the Soviet economy began to slip in the 1980's, North Korean fortunes fell on harder times.

In South Korea, the Rhee regime struggled to modernize an agrarian society after the devastation of war. For many years, massive U.S. aid propped up the South Korean government.⁴² South Koreans also struggled adapting to infusion of Western economic and political philosophy into their Confucian society.

B. ECONOMIC BALANCE SHIFTS

As its economy leveled, North Korea attempted various methods for improving its plight. North Korea initially sought trade relations with less traditional partners, including Europe. These efforts failed as North Korea's credibility

plummeted following default on several sizeable bank loans.⁴³ As China became accustomed to a more open economy, it amended its trading policy with North Korea requiring payment for commercial goods in hard international currency.⁴⁴ With the 1989 demise of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact liberation, foreign aid ended and the DPRK economy plunged.⁴⁵ With factories half empty, food shortages inevitable, and trade sanctions imposed by the U.S., North Korea began exporting the knowledge and expertise to develop missiles and weapons of mass destruction as a means for obtaining the currency needed to purchase required imports.⁴⁶ Despite these and other efforts, the DPRK economy continued to shrink. Given extreme DPRK secrecy, it is difficult to determine confidently the current condition of internal North Korean affairs, but most experts agree that without some change in international circumstances, its economy must soon fail.⁴⁷

In contrast, during the past twenty years, South Korea has evolved into an export market economy, enjoying favorable international trade relations with most nations. Despite the recent Asian recession, most recognize the emerging South Korean economy as a modern miracle. The South Korean economy already greatly exceeds that of North Korea, and this imbalance will widen as North Korea's economy continues to shrink and South Korea's economy expands into the foreseeable future.⁴⁸ Further, in 1992, South Korea and China established formal diplomatic and

trade relations. Their bilateral trade already exceeds that between China and North Korea, and the new relationship grows warmer and more lucrative each year.⁴⁹

V. DPRK ECONOMY COLLAPSES

"Generally in war the best policy is to take a state intact; to ruin it is inferior to this."

Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*⁵⁰

A. "SOFT LANDING" POLICY

As early as 1991, it was apparent to outside observers that the DPRK economy was in serious trouble. Mirror statistics from international imports and exports confirmed that the North's economy had dipped severely during recent years.⁵¹ To make matters worse, Kim Il-sung died suddenly in 1994, and efforts to install his son, Kim Jong-il, appeared to stall. With insufficient arable land, inadequate fertilizer and farming equipment, a failing economy, and international isolation, it appeared that the DPRK regime might soon implode.⁵²

Recent German reunification lessons sobered South Korean and U.S. policy makers, who understood that a sudden DPRK collapse could trigger more security and social problems than it solved.⁵³ South Korean and U.S. officials adopted a "soft landing" policy to improve North-South relations, and hopefully reunify after concerted efforts to upgrade the North's infrastructure.⁵⁴

Both South Korean and U.S. officials opened a dialogue with the North in an effort to promote incremental confidence building measures. In 1991, the two Koreas entered into two agreements intended to reduce tensions: the *South-North Basic Agreement and Joint Declaration on Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula*, and the *North-South Agreement on Non-Aggression, Reconciliation, Exchanges and Cooperation*.⁵⁵ As news of the North's potential nuclear weapons program surfaced, the U.S. and North Korea began bilateral negotiations resulting in the *Agreed Framework Between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea*.⁵⁶ The *Agreed Framework* required North Korea to dismantle two graphite-moderated nuclear reactors (capable of producing weapons grade plutonium), while the U.S., South Korea, and other donors agreed to provide 500,000 barrels of fuel oil annually and build two light water nuclear reactors at a cost of about \$5.14 billion.⁵⁷ Preliminary discussions also began to negotiate and conclude a formal peace treaty to replace the 1953 Armistice document and reduce tensions along the DMZ.⁵⁸

China also sought to avert the imminent dissolution of North Korea by trying to convince DPRK officials to reform their economic policy by creating free trade and economic zones.⁵⁹ Early attempts at this concept by the secretive DPRK regime, however, have shown little promise.⁶⁰

B. NORTH REMAINS BELLIGERENT

"There are certain military and political conditions that are making governments hold back [from providing food aid]."

Kofi Annan, U.N. Secretary General

Despite these conciliatory measures, North Korea continued to provoke a series of crises in inter-Korean and international relations. This brinkmanship was an apparent DPRK tactic to heighten tensions to crisis levels as a psychological ploy to gain concessions from opponents.⁶¹ South Korea captured or killed several undercover DPRK operatives attempting to infiltrate South Korea by boat or submarine. North Korea began test firing long-range missiles.⁶² The U.S. discovered that the North Koreans were building a huge underground complex that looked suspiciously like a nuclear weapons production facility.⁶³ North and South Korean troops clashed within the DMZ.⁶⁴ These events have cooled recent bilateral and multi-lateral diplomatic efforts.

C. FAMINE, FLOODS, AND DROUGHT

"If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat."
Proverbs, 25:21

In August 1995, severe flooding ravaged North Korea and destroyed a substantial portion of its grain crop. What had already been a dangerous food shortage immediately turned into famine. The WFP published its emergency notice urging nations

to donate food, medicines, and related supplies. Though U.N. monitors reported grim conditions within North Korea, many questioned the accuracy of such reports given the lack of access to many regions.⁶⁵

China donated 500,000 MT of grain without restriction.⁶⁶ Other nations donated lesser amounts. It became clear, however, that far more food was needed to avert widespread starvation.⁶⁷ The WFP continued to publish emergency notices, but many governments, including the U.S., were caught off guard by the unprecedented public plea for assistance from Pyongyang. The U.S. and others were uncertain about how best to react to such a request from a rogue enemy.⁶⁸ Then-Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole, for example, decried the request for help suggesting that the U.S. should not "coddle to the enemy."⁶⁹

At first, South Korean and U.S. governments questioned the accuracy of U.N. reports and contemplated how to monitor donations to ensure that they would not unwittingly feed only the North Korean Army, rather than those in need.⁷⁰ Fueling these fears, early non-governmental and private relief efforts encountered a secretive North Korean regime reluctant to permit access to areas in need.⁷¹

As news of the famine and the lack of U.S. response circulated, many criticized the U.S. for failing to provide

immediate, substantial assistance.⁷² The U.S. did not initially follow its aid policy reflected in President Ronald Reagan's famous quote, "A starving child knows no politics."⁷³ Private relief efforts across the U.S. and South Korea sprang to life to gather funds and donations, but such local efforts were woefully insufficient.⁷⁴ News accounts of mass starvation and cannibalism surfaced, and pressure mounted on the U.S. government to assist.⁷⁵

As international relief began trickling into North Korea in mid-1996, it was again hit by substantial flooding, ruining a sizable portion of another year's harvest. The famine spread. Reports suggested that significant numbers of refugees were traveling throughout North Korea and crossing into northeast China in search of food.⁷⁶ Estimates of starvation victims exceeded one million Koreans.⁷⁷ In March 1997, Congress sent a bipartisan delegation led by Senators Inouye and Domenici to assess firsthand the extent of the crisis. While disappointed with the lack of access to affected provinces, they admitted that the DPRK regime would not lose face by asking for international aid unless the challenge was monumental.⁷⁸

As it had in 1995, China again donated more than 500,000 MT of grain, and donations from other nations grew, including sizable donations from South Korea.⁷⁹ Even with these sizable

donations, the WFP reported that an additional 1 million MT of grain were needed just to raise food levels above crisis stage.⁸⁰ Estimates suggested that starvation and severe malnutrition affected more than 5 million North Koreans. In April 1997, the U.S. announced that it would help to feed North Korean children under age six by donating 50,000 MT of corn through the WFP, which had arranged sufficient relief monitoring to satisfy U.S. concerns.⁸¹

The food crisis reached its peak when a severe drought ruined much of the North's 1997 growing season.⁸² China donated an additional 700,000 MT of food, and the U.S. finally offered another 200,000 MT, as well as funds for related U.N. relief efforts.⁸³ Even with these international donations, North Korea's food situation remained very dangerous, prompting the U.N. Secretary General to lament that politics had prevented resolution of this emergency.⁸⁴

Throughout this 3-year period, the WFP has worked with the North Korean regime to improve grain production through heartier seed, improved fertilization and protection from insects, and improved distribution. Despite these efforts, North Korea contains insufficient arable land and fertilizers to grow crops to feed its entire population. These circumstances, coupled with an outmoded distribution system, suggest that North Korea must import more than 1.5 million MT of grain annually, provided

domestic harvests are not severely affected by weather, natural disasters, pests, or other calamities.⁸⁵

VI. ANALYZING U.S. REACTION

A. MISGUIDED INITIAL AID POLICY

"The responsibility of great states is to serve and not to dominate the world."
President Harry Truman, 16 April 1946

For political and security reasons, the U.S. paused before deciding to provide a small amount of food aid to North Korea. The U.S. lacked confidence in U.N. relief reports, insisted on establishing effective monitoring procedures, and balanced too carefully the need to provide relief against its reluctance to feed its enemy.⁸⁶ U.S. security concerns were that food aid would be diverted to the communist party elite and the North Korean Army, and that aid would permit diversion of scarce state funds to military projects.

The U.S. policy analysis was too slow, too linear and too narrow. It focused on the U.S. short-term interest in undermining the DPRK regime. The U.S. long-term regional interests, however, do not focus solely on this *regime*; they focus on the South Korea's security, Japan's security, and the relationship of regional stability to the resolution of the problems on the entire peninsula. As the 1998 U.S. Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region states, "The long-run

U.S. objective remains a peaceful resolution of the Korean conflict with a non-nuclear, democratic, reconciled, and ultimately unified Peninsula."⁸⁷

As outlined earlier, most experts agree that Korea will somehow reunify in the not-too-distant future. Following reunification, the North Korean population will discover that the U.S. was openly reluctant to feed starving Koreans to avert famine, even though it could have done much to alleviate the suffering. (What the people do not discover, groups opposing U.S. interests will surely highlight.) While almost all will agree that the DPRK regime shoulders much of the blame for the world's inability to mitigate this crisis, many will conclude that the U.S. chose to ignore starving Koreans for its own selfish interests.

Because the U.S. chose near-term security over humanitarian interests, Koreans, who hold relationships and "correct" governing so dear, may judge that the U.S. shares at least part of the blame for the death of hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of Koreans. For many, this will mark at least the fourth time in this century that U.S. policies have resulted in widespread suffering for ordinary Koreans.

Contrast the U.S. reaction with that of China. While demanding cash payments for commercial goods, China does not otherwise impose sanctions on North Korean trade, and the

countries maintain cordial bilateral relations. During this crisis, China has provided most of the aid annually, and far more than the prosperous, food-rich U.S. Further, since establishing formal relations in 1992, China and South Korea also enjoy a very fruitful relationship. Thus, China stands as the only major power enjoying good relations with both South and North Korea, and the only one that attempted to alleviate famine. Given the 1,300-year relationship between Korea and China, this should not come as a surprise to anyone. It should also not come as a surprise to anyone if many citizens in unified Korea, angry at U.S. actions during this crisis, support cooperation with China when policies are in conflict with U.S. interests.

Had the U.S. initially provided unrestricted food relief at levels commensurate with the crisis, its long-term interests would have been better served. The long-standing, unambiguous enmity between Washington and Pyongyang would have underscored the clear humanitarian nature of such a decision. In essence, the U.S. would have clearly acted primarily in the *best interests of ordinary Koreans*. Koreans might better appreciate that the U.S. is not intent on dominating Korean society, but instead hopeful that Koreans determine that independence, self-determination, open market economics, and good relations with the U.S. are in their best interests. Had the U.S. initially

risen above its narrow, legalistic insistence on diplomatic norms and formalities of inspection, it would have held the moral high ground in this life-and-death crisis and taken a big step toward earning the confidence of Koreans. Instead, as many as three million Koreans have starved and the situation remains dangerous. Now, the opportunity is lost.

The humanitarian aspects of a U.S. decision to send immediate and significant food aid would also have served to emphasize its stated national interest in inherent human rights.⁸⁸ In this instance, politics so clearly played a key role in decision making that the sincerity of the U.S. interest in human rights falls into question. By refusing to alleviate famine for political reasons, the U.S. undermined its credibility in criticizing China, Serbia, Somalia, Ethiopia, and other regimes for violations of human rights.

Inaction also has exposed the U.S. to potential allegations of racism. The U.S. is already committed to protracted operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina primarily because it could not tolerate the inhumane nature of that civil conflict. Now, the U.S. is considering commitment of forces to the Kosovo region in Serbia, again because it is concerned about a civil war in which several hundred ethnic Albanian civilians apparently have been killed by Serbian forces quelling the insurrection. The U.S. failure to respond to the North Korean crisis when it has

responded so visibly to these Balkan crises may be perceived as prejudiced against Asians.

B. FUTURE U.S. POLICY

"The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them."

Albert Einstein

Many may argue that the U.S. food policy toward North Korea is proper and wise, because it may hasten the demise of the Pyongyang regime so that the people of North Korea (and security of U.S. servicemen) will, in the long run, stand in better stead. Others may highlight that the Pyongyang regime is solely at fault for purposefully preventing the Western powers from pursuing their humanitarian mandate by restricting proper access.⁸⁹ Still others may argue that sending significant food aid would have served only to feed the North Korean Army. These arguments apply more aptly to the long-term food policy now that the world understands more accurately the nature of the crisis. The North Korean food situation is, after all, permanently dangerous. Annual production, even with the best of harvests, will leave North Korea with a food deficit of between 1.3 and 1.8 million metric tons.⁹⁰ This is woefully insufficient to feed 23 million North Koreans, so serious food shortages will remain an annual challenge. It is quite a different circumstance to

react humanely to an unexpected catastrophe than to subsidize permanently the economy of an enemy, or even an ally.

Of course, the ultimate responsibility to feed its people remains with the DPRK regime. After the catastrophe is fully understood, if they fail to adjust their policies to ensure adequate food supplies for everyone, they clearly would not be governing "correctly."⁹¹ Further, if the world were to guarantee free annual food subsidies, there would be no incentive to spur improvements in food production and distribution, or to stop diverting much of its budget to military activities.

The point is that the U.S. could have provided substantial, unrestricted immediate aid to save millions of lives, and thereafter worked with the U.N., China, Japan, South Korea, and others to assess the challenges and insist upon legitimate steps to prevent recurrence. This tactic would have captured the respect of all in the region, enhanced the relationship between the U.S. and Korean people, legitimized U.S. humanitarian interests, and placed squarely on the Pyongyang regime the burden of fixing the problem or solely suffering the consequences. It is unfortunate that the U.S. did not act "correctly" at the outset of this crisis because it could now criticize North Korean recalcitrance from a position of diplomatic and political strength.

An excellent example of this logic is offered by considering the efforts of Doctors Without Borders (DWB), a private charity headquartered in France. When the crisis erupted, DWB sent several teams of physicians to North Korea to tend to the needy. In September 1998, after more than 16 months of struggling with the bureaucratic and secrecy demands of the DPRK government, DWB reluctantly announced that it was ending operations.⁹²

DWB acted properly, humanely, "correctly" from any humanitarian perspective. They immediately provided assistance to avert disaster. When the DPRK regime refused adequate support, DWB legitimately ceased operations. Their short-term objective was to assist Koreans by whatever means were available. They steadfastly performed their humanitarian role for as long as circumstances permitted. In the long-term, the DPRK regime, not DWB, clearly will shoulder the stigma of preventing medical assistance from reaching victims.

For the past several years, U.N. agricultural and economic experts have identified for DPRK leaders what must be done to consistently raise sufficient food and to purchase sufficient imports. Pyongyang has steadfastly ignored the advice of the international experts, relying instead upon a policy of brinkmanship to obtain needed capital and infrastructure improvements. The time is ripe for the international community to insist that North Korea amend its policies or go it alone.

The U.S. would have enjoyed far more credibility in making such arguments had it not initially allowed near-term politics to override humanitarian decency.

The U.N., South Korea, U.S., China, Japan, Russia and others must work together quickly to send an unambiguous message to Pyongyang that agricultural and economic recommendations of international experts are legitimate and non-threatening. This should isolate the DPRK regime and undermine the illusory effects of brinkmanship. It is important to resolve this quickly because people continue to die, and it is only a matter of time before the next disappointing harvest.⁹³

Whatever path the U.S. chooses at this stage, it should weigh carefully how ordinary Koreans will judge its policies in the long term. It must also orchestrate a coherent and convincing information campaign that accurately promotes its policies. This is because, before too long, the U.S. might succeed in attaining its stated long-term goal of resolving peacefully the Korean division resulting in a unified, democratic, non-nuclear Korea. At that stage, all Koreans (including *all* North Koreans) would become voters. Unless the U.S. is able to establish a special, trusting relationship, Korean voters may support a path that restores their traditional relationship with China.

[Word Count: 5,936]

ENDNOTES

¹ A full summary of the World Food Program (WFP) efforts in North Korea through 1997 is contained in "FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 25 November 1997;" available from <http://shrine.cyber.ad.jp/morsin/flood/971125wfp.html>; Internet; accessed 20 November 1998.

² "North Korea Asks for Help, But Continues Rhetoric, 1 September 1995;" available from http://www.business-server.com/newsroom/ntn/world/090195/world146_13.html; Internet; accessed 5 January 1999; Alexander Zhebin, "North Korea: Recent Developments and Prospects for Change," *The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 12 (Winter/Spring 1998): 160; Mary Jordon, "No Help Set for N.Korea," *Washington Post Foreign Service*; 15 May 1996; available from <http://rs9.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?r104:1:./temp/~r104es51c0:e37801:>; Internet; accessed 7 January 1999.

³ The author interviewed Department of Defense (DoD) officials with firsthand knowledge of DoD policy discussions concerning North Korea throughout the period 1995-98. Those officials asked not to be identified. These sources related that DoD and other U.S. officials were surprised by the secretive DPRK's public plea for international assistance. Generally, DoD did not oppose providing emergency food aid, but did require time to consider recommendations for the most appropriate means. Later, domestic political concerns and debates over acceptable monitoring methods arose between the Administration and Congress, as well as coordination concerns between the U.S. and South Korea. They also sensed that many politicians were concerned about how the American people may view a U.S. policy to provide food relief to such a rogue enemy. [Hereinafter referred to as *DoD Discussions*.]

⁴ In February 1996, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) released \$2.24 million in grants to UNICEF and the WFP, and to support an independent Food Program Observer who would assess distribution. "US Agency for International Development Fact Sheet, U.S. Humanitarian Assistance to North Korea," 20 February 1997; available from <http://www.info.usaid.gov/press/releases/970220.htm>; Internet; accessed 5 January 1999. Relative to the enormity of the crisis

and the significance of donations from other nations, this was a paltry amount.

⁵ U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, "North Korea: Humanitarian Assistance," Press Statement by Nicholas Burns, 15 April 1997.

⁶ U.S. food aid policy states essentially that the hungry must be fed; see, e.g., "The North Korean Famine," August 1997; available from

<<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/forum/august97/korea1.html>>; Internet; accessed 8 January 1999. This policy continues, today, see U.S. Department of Defense, The United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 1998), 11.

⁷ See, e.g., Nicholas Eberstadt, Korea Approaches Reunification (New York: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 1995); Amos A. Jordan, Korean Unification: Implications for Northeast Asia (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic Studies, 1993); Young Whan Kihl, ed. Korea and the World: Beyond the Cold War (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1994); Amos A. Jordan, ed., Korean Unification (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1993).

⁸ In addition to the arguments provided within the sources in Endnote 6, see, Youn-Suk Kim and Semoon Chang, "Inter-Korean Business Economics," Asian Profile 26 (June 1998), 207-14.

⁹ DoD discussions. Sources revealed that even the Chinese believed that North Korea may soon fail and temporarily softened certain controversial policy stances. As it became clear that the Pyongyang regime may yet weather the storm, China reverted to its traditional policies.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Defense, The United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 1998), 11.

¹¹ Donald Stone Macdonald, The Koreans (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 2.

¹² For detailed discussions about the relative success of the two Koreas' economies, see, Eberstadt, Korea Approaches Reunification; Jordan, *supra*; Macdonald, 193-228.

¹³ Macdonald, 26.

¹⁴ Ben Kremanak, Korea's Road to Unification: Potholes, Detours, and Dead Ends (College Park: Center for International and Security Studies, 1997), 18-20.

¹⁵ Kremanak, 19-22.

¹⁶ Macdonald, 3.

¹⁷ Kremanak, 19.

¹⁸ Macdonald, 10-12.

- ¹⁹ Ibid., 28-31
- ²⁰ Ibid., 13.
- ²¹ Macdonald, 11-6.
- ²² Nicholas Eberstadt, Korea Approaches Reunification, 158-65.
- ²³ Kremanak, 21.
- ²⁴ Macdonald, 12-15.
- ²⁵ Ibid., 36-41.
- ²⁶ Kremanak, 21-3.
- ²⁷ Kremanak, 22.
- ²⁸ See e.g., Ibid., 32-35; Macdonald, 169-71.
- ²⁹ Macdonald 54, 57-9.
- ³⁰ Macdonald, 115-61.
- ³¹ Ibid., 116-20.
- ³² Sun Tzu, The Art of War, Samuel B. Griffith, trans. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963, 84.
- ³³ Ibid., 237-38.
- ³⁴ Donald W. Boose, Jr., "Portentous Sideshow: The Korean Occupation Decision," Parameters (U.S. Army War College: Winter 1995-96), 112-125. Boose argues that the U.S. Army did all that was possible to occupy Korea south of the 38th Parallel. Others suggest that the U.S. Army was reluctant to occupy Korea further north; see, Ronald L. McGlothlen, Controlling the Waves, Dean Acheson and U.S. Foreign Policy in Asia (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993), 50-1.
- ³⁵ Macdonald, 15-18, 43-9; McGlothlen, 51-2.
- ³⁶ See e.g., Callum MacDonald, "The Democratic People's Republic of Korea: an Historical Survey," in North Korea in the New World Order, ed. Hazel Smith, et al. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 1-12.
- ³⁷ Macdonald, 40.
- ³⁸ David S. McLellan, Dean Acheson, the State Department Years, (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1976), 209-11.
- ³⁹ Macdonald, 51.
- ⁴⁰ For a detailed discussion of the economic development and government policies in divided Korea during the period 1945-1990, see Eberstadt, Korea Approaches Reunification, 3-40.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., 56; MacDonald, 9-12.
- ⁴² Ibid., 53-58; see also discussions about U.S. aid to South Korea in McGlothlen, 52-58, 64-9, 74-5.
- ⁴³ See e.g., Michael Hindley and James Bridges, "Europe and North Korea," in North Korea in the New World Order, supra, 74-82.

⁴⁴ Stephen Kirby, "The Effects of Regional Power Factors on Inter-Korean Relations and Implications of the Nuclear Issue for the Northeast Asian Security Order," *Ibid.*, 55-6.

⁴⁵ Eberstadt, Korea Approaches Reunification, 3-40. For an analysis of the current North Korean economy, see Nicholas Eberstadt, "North Korea's Interlocked Economic Crises, Some indication from 'Mirror Statistics'," Asian Survey, XXXVIII, 3 (March 1998), 203-30.

⁴⁶ Macdonald, 187-88; for a chronological outline of North Korean nuclear developments during the period 1985-95, see "North Korean Nuclear Timeline," available from <<http://rs9.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?r104:1:/temp/~r104sGKJGZ:e36264:>>, Internet, accessed 7 January 1999.

⁴⁷ Many articles address the failing North Korean economy, as well as its potential effects on reunification. See, e.g., Brian J. Barna, "An Economic Roadmap to Korean Reunification: Pitfalls and Prospects," Asian Survey, XXXVIII, 3 (March 1998), 265-90; Victor D. Cha, "Korean Unification: The Zero-Sum past and the Precarious Future," Asian Perspective 21 (Winter 1997), 63-92; Zhebin, 135-64.

⁴⁸ Eberstadt, Korea Approaches Reunification, 3-40.

⁴⁹ Kirby, 49-59.

⁵⁰ Tzu, 77.

⁵¹ For a detailed analysis of the state of the North Korean economy based upon import-export data, see, Nicholas Eberstadt, "North Korea's Interlocked Economic Crises, Some indication from 'Mirror Statistics'," Asian Survey, XXXVIII, 3 (March 1998), 203-30.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ There are many examples of the U.S., South Korea, Japan, China preference for a "soft landing. The unique Korean circumstances pose greater challenges for reunification even than the serious consequences suffered when Germany reunified. For a comparison of the German experience and a discussion of the political, economic, social, security, and diplomatic challenges associated with Korean unification, see Young-Kyu Park, "Post-Unification Challenges," Korean Unification, 35-46. See also, Eberstadt, Korea Approaches Reunification, 102-27, and 129-65.

⁵⁴ Park Jongchul, "US Policy Towards North Korea: Strategy, Perception, and Inter-Korean Relations," The Journal of East Asian Affairs, 12 (Summer/Fall 1998), 528-52.

⁵⁵ North-South Agreement on Non-Aggression, Reconciliation, Exchanges and Cooperation, December 1991; South-North Basic

Agreement and the Joint Declaration on Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, December 1991.

⁵⁶ Agreed Framework Between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, 21 October 1994.

⁵⁷ Ibid. It is important to note, however, that Congress may torpedo a vital component of the Agreed Framework by barring release of \$35 million to finance fuel deliveries to North Korea. See, "House Rebuffs Clinton on IMF," 17 September 1998; available from

<<http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/us/DailyNew/imf980917.html>>
; Internet; accessed 8 January 1999.

⁵⁸ For a discussion of these and other efforts to engage North Korea, see, Jongchul, 536-42.

⁵⁹ See e.g., Steve Glain, "China Pushes North Korean Commerce," Wall Street Journal, 16 September 1996, Section A, Column 1, p. 15.

⁶⁰ Examples of North Korean attempts at free economic zones, particularly joint ventures with South Korea, are summarized at "North Korea Report," October 1997; available from <<http://www.koryogroup.com/asl/html/oct97.html>>; Internet; accessed 8 January 1999; See also, Barna, supra, Endnote 43.

⁶¹ See e.g., "North Korea Asks for Help, But Continues Rhetoric," 1 September 1995, available from <http://www.business-server.com/newsroom/ntn/world/090195/world146_13.html>, Internet, accessed 5 January 1999.

⁶² For an excellent chronology of recent nuclear weapons and missile tensions involving North Korea, see "1998 North Korea Special Weapons: Nuclear, Biological, Chemical and Missile Proliferation News," 10 October 1998; available from <<http://www.fas.org/news/dprk/1998/index.html>>; Internet; accessed 4 November 1998.

⁶³ For a discussion of the various arguments surrounding the North Korean underground facility and other recent tensions, see, e.g., "N.Korea Demands U.S. Compensate Economic Losses," 7 January 1999; available from

<http://abcnews.go.com/sire/World/Reuters19990107_249.html>;
Internet; and "North Korea Backpedaling?," 6 December 1998; available from <<http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/world/DailyNews/northkorea981206.html>>; Internet; both accessed 8 January 1999.

⁶⁴ Barr Seitz, "The Fighting is the Worst Since the 1970s, Korean Troops Clash," 17 July 1997; available from <<http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/world/korea2716/index.html>>
; Internet; accessed 8 January 1999.

⁶⁵ For an excellent history of U.N. efforts in North Korea during 1995-97, see "Special Alert No. 277, FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," 11 September 1997; available from <http://www.fao.org/giews/english/alertes/sa277kor.htm>; Internet; accessed 20 November 1998.

⁶⁶ In 1995, both China and Japan donated 500,000 MT of food, each. See, e.g., "North Korea Report," 10 December 1998; available from <http://www.koryogroup.com/asl/html/oct97.html>; Internet; accessed 10 December 1998.

⁶⁷ The author discussed the economics of North Korea's food deficit with Andrew Natsios, former vice president, World Vision (& former Director, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance in the Bush Administration). He indicated that the annual food shortage between 1995-97 was as much as 2 million MT.

⁶⁸ DoD Discussions, see Endnote 3.

⁶⁹ U.S. Senate, "Concurrent Resolution of the Budget," 15 May 1996; available from <http://rs9.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?r104es51c0:e37801:>; Internet; accessed 7 January 1999, citing Senator Bob Dole's criticism of relief aid as rewarding the missile-exporting North Koreans, and "coddling" the Stalinist regime.

⁷⁰ See, e.g., "The North Korean Famine," 26 August 1997; available from <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/forum/august1997/korea8-26.html>; Internet; accessed 8 January 1999. Within this debate forum, World Vision vice president, Andrew Natsios, criticizes U.S. food policy as taking its lead from the South Korean regime. According to Natsios, "The South Korea government is very hostile [to food aid] because they're threatened by the North Korean military machine, which is huge, and the South Korea government is lobbying very hard not to . . . send too much food in."

⁷¹ Teruaki Ueno, "U.N. Says Famine-Stricken People Dying in Waves, North Koreans Still Starving," 14 April 1998; available from <http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/world/DailyNews/northkorea980414.html>; Internet; accessed 8 January 1999. In this report, U.N. WFP director, Catherine Bertini, lashes out at North Korea for not letting international aid workers monitor distribution of food.

⁷² See e.g., Liz Sly, "Famine Peril Acute in Flooded N. Korea," Chicago Tribune, 8 August 1996, Section 1, Column 5, p. 20; "Floods, Famine Hit N. Korea for Second Year," USA Today, 30 July 1996, Section A, Column 6, p. 12; Carroll Bogert & Jeffrey

Bartholet, "Starving and Alone," Newsweek, Vol. 129, 21 April 1997, p. 48; Nigel Holloway, "The Politics of Starvation," World Press Review, Vol. 44, Issue 7, July 1997; "Why is North Korea Starving?" Economist, Volume 343, 7 June 1997, p. 35-6; David Woo, "Starvation Stalks a Wasted Land," Insight on the News, Vol. 14, Issue 24, p. 19-20; "Famine Rages in North Korea," 15 September 1997; available from http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/world/koreafamine_915/index.html; Internet; accessed 8 January 1999, wherein Andrew Natsios, vice president of World Vision, a respected global relief charity, urged the U.S., Japan, South Korea, and China to set aside political concerns and step up aid to save "poor people who have no political power."

⁷³ "The North Korean Famine," August 1997; available from <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/forum/august97/korea1.html>; Internet; accessed 8 January 1999.

⁷⁴ Two of many examples of such private relief efforts are the American Friends Service Committee and its Korea Relief Fund [See, "The Good Crisis Continues in North Korea," 4 Jun 98; available from <http://www.afsc.org/nkcrisis.htm>]; Internet; accessed 10 December 1998]; and Food for the Hungry [See, "The North Korean Famine," August 1997, available from <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/forum/august97/korea1.html>]; Internet; accessed 10 December 1998.

⁷⁵ Barr Seitz, "Starving N. Koreans Suffer But Troops Kept Fed, Cannibalism in N. Korea," 1 October 1997, available from <http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/world/nkorea929/index.html>; Internet; accessed 8 January 1999. Several different North Korean defectors reported that people were insane with hunger and had begun eating their own infants. One woman was allegedly arrested for killing 18 children in Hamhung.

⁷⁶ World Vision officials have interviewed numerous refugees along the Chinese border in an attempt to determine the extent of the famine. World Vision announced in September 1997 that as much as 15% of the North Korean population had starved to death. See, "North Korea Report," September 1997; available from <http://www.koryogroup.com/asl/html/sept97.html>; Internet; accessed 8 January 1999.

⁷⁷ WFP Special Alert No. 277, supra.

⁷⁸ "Inside North Korea," 8 April 1997; available from http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/asia/april97/nkorea_4-8.html; Internet; accessed 10 December 1998; and Todd Zaun, "U.S. Congressional Delegation Says North Korea Too Secretive, Threat to Withhold Aid," 1997; available from <http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/world/korea812/index.html>; Internet; accessed 8 January 1999. U.S. Representative Porter

J. Goss sums up the sympathies of the congressional delegation, "North Korea must make its food distribution to the civilian population fully transparent and verifiable."

⁷⁹ Moon Ihlwan, "Helped Conditioned on Change Toward 'Cooperation,' South Offers N. Korea Aid," 15 August 1997; available from <http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/world/korea815/index.html>; Internet; accessed 8 January 1999. By early 1997, South Korea had donated more than \$257 million worth of food to the North.

⁸⁰ WFP Special Alert No. 277, supra.

⁸¹ U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, "North Korea: Humanitarian Assistance," Press Statement by Nicholas Burns, 15 April 1997. Through 1997, the U.S. had provided only \$52 million worth of food and other relief aid to North Korea. See, "Food Crisis is Getting Worse, Richardson Says 'Military Not Getting Aid'" 15 August 1997; available from <http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/world/koreaaid815/index.html>; Internet; accessed 8 January 1999.

⁸² WFP Special Alert No. 277, supra.

⁸³ U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, "North Korea: Assessment Team," U.S. Department of State, October 20, 1997. In addition to 50,000 metric tons of corn donated through the WFP, the U.S. donated \$5 million in medical assistance to the DPRK through UNICEF. Although China earlier agreed to send 500,000 MT of grain annually until the crisis subsided, Senior Colonel Zwang stated that China provided 700,000 MT in 1997.

⁸⁴ Belinda Goldsmith, "North Korean Children on the Brink of Starvation, U.N. Pleads for Food," 11 August 1998; available from

<http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/world/korea811/index.html>; Internet; accessed 8 January 1999. This article alleges that the U.S., Japan, and South Korea have also linked food aid to North Korean presence at peace talks. "There are certain military and political conditions that are making governments hold back." Kofi Annan, U.N. Secretary General.

⁸⁵ Eberstadt, "North Korea's Interlocked Economic Crises, Some indication from 'Mirror Statistics'," 203-30. In my discussions with Mr. Natsios, the author discussed the economics of North Korea's food deficit. He provided convincing evidence that North Korea has always been incapable of growing sufficient grain to feed its population, and, since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, its economic troubles prevent it from purchasing sufficient grain. The WFP continues to publish emergency notices concerning the food deficit in North Korea despite good 1998 harvests; See, e.g., "WFP Emergency Report No. 35," 4 September 1998; available from

<<http://www.wfp.org/ereport/980904.html>>; Internet; accessed 24 October 1998.

⁸⁶ See, e.g., "U.S. May Cut Food to N.Korea," 9 October 1998; available from
<<http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/world/nkorea109/index/html>>; Internet; accessed 8 January 1999. "We will not provide assistance unless there is effective monitoring"—Leonard Roger, AID administrator.

⁸⁷ U.S. Department of Defense, The United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 1998.

⁸⁸ The White House, A National Security Strategy for a New Century, (Washington, D.C.: The White House, October 1998), 34-5.

⁸⁹ Nicholas Eberstadt, "The Dangerous Korea," National Review, 31 December 1998, 35-6.

⁹⁰ In my discussions with Mr. Natsios, he provided conservative WFP assessments of North Korea food production and unmet requirements. The figures provided are based upon the fall 1998 food harvest, the best since before the famine began. These deficits, however, do not include grain needed to feed animal herds or for industrial production.

⁹¹ It is important, however, to keep in mind that the North Korean government would not face as big a problem but for the trade embargo and sanctions imposed by the U.S. and others; see, U.S. Department of the Treasury handout, "North Korea: An Overview of the Foreign Assets Control Regulations as They Relate to North Korea," CFR, Title 31, Part 500.

⁹² Eberstadt, "The Dangerous Korea," 35. See also, "MSF Calls on Donors to Review Their Aid Policy Towards DPRK: Urgent needs in North Korea but MSF Forced to Pull Out," 30 September 1998; available from

<<http://www.msf.org/intweb99/news/pressrel/julsep98/nkorea1.htm>>; Internet, accessed 8 January 1999. DWB [English translation of MSF] urged donor nations to put pressure on the DPRK regime to demand that it is more accountable and that the North Korean government ensures that humanitarian agencies can freely and impartially assess needs, deliver aid, have direct access to the population, and assess the effectiveness of their programs.

⁹³ "UN's Food Aid Agency Warns 1999 Outlook Bleak," 30 December 1998; available from
<http://Abcnews.go.com/wire/World/Reuters19981230_134.html>; Internet; accessed 8 January 1998.

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